

## WAR AND SPEED

**H**ow fast did construction go during World War II?

The following story illustrates the answer for the Corps' Southwestern Division:

"The construction of two bomber modifications plants at Tulsa and Oklahoma City showed the speed at which the Southwestern Division and its districts worked.

"The Office, Chief of Engineers, ordered two large 'hangar-like, fireproof structures of concrete and steel' and wanted them immediately. The price tag for each was \$4 million. Within 24 hours of receipt of the orders, the Tulsa District Engineer, Col. Francis J. Wilson, had signed contracts with two architectural/engineering firms. The

companies moved with amazing speed. Major General Thomas M. Robins, assistant chief of engineers, described the construction:

"Progress on both jobs proceeded at about the same rate, neither job getting more than a few days ahead of the other. . . The methods of attack used by the two contractors on the erection of the buildings, however, were quite different. [One] chose to erect freestanding concrete columns and to start the roof steel almost immediately, while the [other] chose to erect the concrete center portion first, letting the roof steel wait until that part of the work was complete."

Construction of the two plants, normally expected to take one year, was finished in three months.<sup>5</sup>



**Col. Wilson, seated, and his key staff, led much of the Tulsa District World War II work, 1942–1946. Below, the District built airfields such as Enid Army Air Field, 1944.**

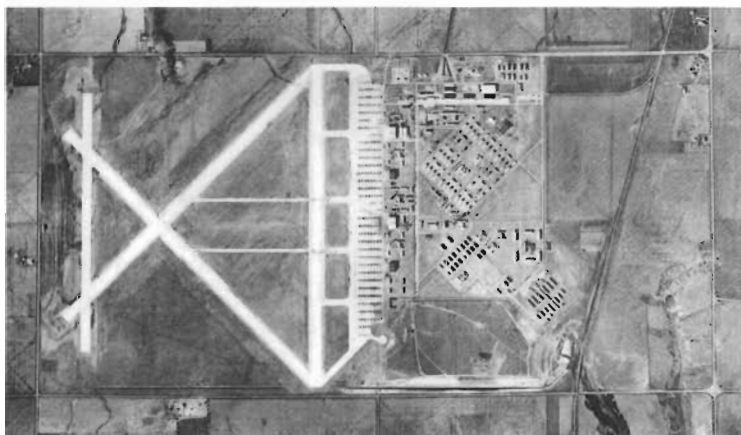


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